

Overview

2004 Forest Service Planning Rule

What I am going to talk about:

- A little planning history.
- An overview of the new planning rule in comparison to the previous rule.
- Specifics about how Source Water Protection could be addressed in a revised plan.

A Brief History

- 1976 Passage of National Forest Management Act (NFMA)
- 1979 First NFMA Rule published
- 1982 Slightly revised Rule
- 2000 New Rule
- 2002 Implementation of 2000 Rule delayed
- 2004 New Final Rule approved

What the Rule does and doesn't do

- Establishes a new way of ***planning***, not a new way to ***manage*** the Forests.
- Does not affect project level analysis.
- Has no effect until a Plan is amended or revised under the new rule.
- May change ***how*** we involve the public, and other agencies, but encourages ***more*** involvement, rather than ***less***.

Much Stays the Same

- Commitment to sustaining the health, diversity and productivity of the National Forests and Grasslands.
- Compliance with environmental statutes and regulations.
- Ecological, Social and Economic sustainability is the foundation for management.
- Still committed to species conservation.

Also staying the same

- Consider best available science.
- Environmental Analysis at appropriate scales.
- Proposed plans subject to 90-day public review.
- Project-level Plan amendments are subject to appeal.

Increased emphasis in the Rule

- Opportunities for the public to be involved.
- Participation by Tribes, other Federal agencies and local governments.

What is Different?

- Plans will be more strategic.
- Most plans won't require an EIS or EA; Plans can be adopted through a new Categorical Exclusion (CE)
- Plans will not be considered "Final Agency Actions" – Final decisions will occur at the project level.

More Differences

- Plan development will occur collaboratively with the public, looking at “options” iteratively rather than “alternatives” under NEPA.
- Plant and animal diversity is provided through coarse filter/fine filter analysis.
- Guidelines replace Standards.
- Forest Supervisor is the Responsible Official.

More Differences

- Objection process replaces Appeal process.
- Some aspects of each Plan will be monitored using an Environmental Management System (EMS).
- Plans are a set of documents – adaptable to new conditions, new science, or changing social values, after monitoring.
- ESA Consultation?

Plan Components

- Desired conditions
- Objectives
- Guidelines
- Suitability of Areas
- Special areas

None of these are final decisions approving projects and activities.

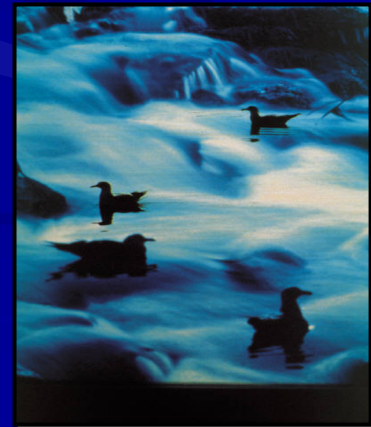
Evaluations and Monitoring

- Evaluation Reports will be done for revisions, amendments.
- Annual evaluation report of monitoring information.
- Monitoring program developed with public participation.
- Consider key social, economic and ecological measures.

Science in Monitoring

The plan monitoring program shall be developed with public participation and take into account ... the best available science.

§219.6 (b)(1)(iii)



Monitoring Program must also:

- Take into account financial and technical capabilities.
- Determine if multiple-use objectives are being met.
- Determine effects of management on the productivity of the land.
- Determine if progress is being made toward desired conditions and objectives.

Examples

How Source Water Protection
Could Fit into a Forest Plan

Desired Conditions

- Condition of vegetation
- Transportation System
- Channel condition
- Monitoring

Objectives

- Restoration
- Fuels reduction
- Road management
- Monitoring

Suitable Use Determinations

- Recreation uses
- Vegetation management
- Fire Use/Fire Suppression
- Livestock use
- Monitoring

Special Areas

- Congressional designation
- Secretary of Agriculture agreement
- Designation as a watershed with special management direction
- Monitoring

Guidelines

- Sideboards for timber harvest.
- Seasonal restrictions on activities.
- Sideboards for road construction or maintenance.
- Monitoring

What's next for R6?

- 6 ongoing revisions are transitioning to the new rule
- Other forests will use new rule when they revise
- EMS needs to be established for each forest
- Training sessions for Forests in May and June – other agencies invited

Conclusion

- This is a practical rule
- Gives us a real opportunity to practice adaptive management
- Increases visibility of our monitoring process and accountability
- Allows us to acknowledge uncertainty, describe intent and correct along the way

Questions?